

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An electro-mechanical actuator for the release of a tailgate latch mechanism to open the tailgate by remote control in combination with a module that slows or stops the descent of the tailgate to prevent it from crashing down. In one embodiment the module

5 is a pre-tensioned spring linkage with some degree of lost motion which arrests the tailgate in a partially open position. In another embodiment the module is a viscous fluid damper or a gas spring which limits the speed of travel of the tailgate. The actuator permits both manual and remote controlled opening of the tailgate is and suitable for after-market installation. Unintentional opening of the tailgate sends a

10 warning to the operator.